PETERS ENLARGEMENT UPON THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH.

By Master HARRIS.

The fourth Edition.

PSAL. 34. 17.

The Righteous cry, and the Lord heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

LONDON,
Printed by *Robert Young* for *John Bartlet*, and are to be sold at the *Golden Cup*, in the Gold-Smiths Row in *Cheape-side*. 1626.

To the Reader.

THis Sermon (thus made vp with mine owne & others notes) I now ſubmit to Authority and Cenſure: for ſubſtance, I yeeld heere is no more than what was deliuered; whether no leſſe, I haue not now to ſay: for circumſtance (I yeeld to the allegation) I acknowledge it ſeaſonable. The times ſhall euer be cleared by praier whenſoeuer they looke ſadly vpon vs. Our Brethren abroad cry ſtill in the Churches words; *The harueſt is paſt, and the Summer is ended, and wee are not holpen*; and wee (mee thinkes) ſhould adde with *Ieremie*, verſ. 21. *I am ſore vexed for the hurt of the daughter of my people, I am heauy, aſtoniſhment hath taken me; Is there no balme at Gilead, &c.* At home howſoeuer the Lord hath been gracious to *Ier.* 8. 20.

vs in the ſcarcity, yet wee may in moſt places, take vp the Prophets words in another ſenſe, *Is the ſeede yet in the Barne? as yet the Trees haue not been deliuered of their burthen.* Looke into the 65. *Pſalme*, and thou ſhalt finde, that it is the Lord that findes both ground and ſeede, that giues both growth and ripening to the Corne; and therefore wee ſhould waite vpon him with our preſents of praiſe & praier. This were enough to make vs pray, but this is the leaſt of many motiues, for, *Reader* thou ſeeſt the times, the World is now all eare and tongue, the moſt giuen with the *Athenians* to little elſe than to heare and tell newes, (vncertaine newes, the Authour of all lies, as his Maieſtie hath told vs) the reſt are willing alſo to heare, and to heare Gods Truth, not Fables, and therin they doe but as Saint *Iames* would haue them, ſo as they would adde doing to hearing as hee commands. But alas, whilſt we only profeſſe and diſcourſe of Religion, wee driue the practiſe of Religion out of the world, as one too iuſtly complaines. It is lamentable to conſider the little vſe that is made of Gods Ordi-

Hag. 2. 20.

Pſal. 65. 9, 10, 11.

Demonol. l. 3. *c.* 1. *ad finem.*

Sir *W. Ral.* preface.

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nances in moſt places; Preachers too often (I tremble to ſpeake it) be vſed like poſt-horſes, ſpurd on till they be ſpent, & then a freſh is called for, in the meane the world ſits ſtill and thinkes to be ſaued for hearing. *Reader*, mourne for this, weep for this, for this boads a Iudgement, the Lord will reckon for the bloud of his Prophets ſpent as well as ſhed. To theſe reaſons, it will not be hard for thee to adde more, look within thee, and round about thee, and ſo ſtirre vp thy ſelfe to this exerciſe of Prayer, an exerciſe (I can aſſure thee) of vnſpeakable ſtrength and comfort, an exerciſe without which thou canſt not liue, and by which thou maieſt liue in the mouth of death. Beleeue it, wert thou in an eſtate more deſperate than death, in a place worſe than hell; yet if there thou couldeſt pray truly, thou ſhouldeſt finde comfort and ſtrength beyond hope, for Prayer is better than our hopes, and yet God is better to vs than our prayer. Firſt, for that which is publique, follow him who was no time-ſeruer, make no ſmall account of publique prayers. Secondly, for priuate, pauſe before thou ſpeak,

remember who ſpake it: if a man would not deliuer an Oration to a Prince *ex tempore* and ſuddenly, it will not become vs to open our mouthes raſhly before our Maker. ſecondly, keepe touch with God; firſt, for extraordinary and incidentall occaſions, be ſure to keepe thy ſelfe in ſuch a ſtate and condition of ſoule, as that euer thou canſt recollect thy ſelfe, and call in all the powers of thy ſoule for this buſineſſe vpon a ſhort warning: ſecondly, for ordinary times, ſo neere as may bee, faile not of thine houre: when the Clock ſtrikes, the Schollar runnes to his book; thou muſt to God, leauing all, there tender thy ſelfe (though not alwaies alike fit) and ſo be in the way and place of preferment: if words will not come, ſigh, *God heares the ſighing of his priſoners*: if thou canſt not ſigh, breathe, God hath an eare for that, *Lam.* 3. 56. Howeuer, there bee, there ſtand, & the childe that ſtands before his father, & appeares in his place at ſupper-time with his trencher in his hand, ſpeakes with his countenance, and ſpeedes accordingly: he was wiſe who ſaid, They pray not altogether of faſhion, who ſee their infirmity

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in praying, and are grieued for it; the worſt prayers that wee make (to our owne ſenſe I meane) ſpeede euer beſt, and then wee pray moſt happily, when wee ariſe moſt humbled.

Thirdly, when thou haſt prayed, doe not as children, who neuer looke after their arrow; but as *Daniel, cap.* 9.1. take notice of thine enlargements in prayer, and of thy ſucceſſe after, write downe time and place as the Prophet doth, and ſo helpe thy ſelfe in future times by former experiments. I ſee this Porch growes wide, and therefore I will conclude. If thou be acquainted with praier, thou knoweſt there is more in it than can bee expreſſed; if thou bee not acquainted, grow acquainted, and thou ſhalt finde me true. If thou wanteſt further motiues and directions, I commend (in this haſte) to thee, who art but a poore Engliſh priuate man; Firſt, for the promiſes (whereof the heart muſt chew before prayer) the *Treatiſe of faith*. Secondly, for motiues, the *Epiſtle to the key of Heauen*. Thirdly for caſes of Conſcience, & directions after praier, 2. *Treatiſes* on *Eph.* 6. *viz. The ſpiritual Armour*, and

and now after directions & exhortations, what remaines but practiſe? in ſtead of others pratling & enterdealing in State-buſineſſe, do thou pray, pray for thy Soueraign, for his ſeed, for the Churches, for thy ſelfe, for thy charge, and vſe no more words againſt mens ſins, than thou wilt make prayers for their ſoules in ſecret, if thou wilt haue comfort in thy words. Thus much of this: Now *Reader* to thee; if theſe plaine notes paſſe the Preſſe, know that I neither did entend their publiſhing before I preached them, nor can intend notwithſtanding their refining ſince. If the world may be bettered by them, or by any thing I can doe, I haue enough, only I deſire mercy and equity from my friends: thoſe notes of mine which they haue, I will my ſelf (after my publike Miniſtery) now ſhortly reuiſe: let no man doe ſo ill an office as to thruſt out other mens notes without their priuity, eſpecially his, who can do nothing worthy this Age.

RO. HARRIS.

PETERS ENLARGEMENT.

Acts 12.6,7.

And when Herod would haue brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping betweene two souldiers, bound with two chaines; and the Keepers before the doore, kept the prison.

And behold, the Angell of the Lord came vpon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him vp, saying; Arise vp quickly: And his chaines fell off from his hands, &c.

HERE is a story of *Peters*, 1. Imprisonment. 2. Enlargement: With the cause of the one, and meanes of the other. *Herod* hauing vexed some, slaine a second, now commits the third; and all this to gratifie the Iewes. *Peter* thus committed, is bailed by the Church, or rather remooued and freed by petition; they pray heartily for him, in the 5. verse, and they speede as

happily, whileſt they are praying, God giues-in the priſoner amongſt them. The manner of his deliuery is here reported, and that was very ſtrange, beyond *Herods* purpoſe, the priſoners expectation, the Keepers meaning, all mens hopes: *Herod* held his purpoſe hee had begun, and the next morning hee meant an end of him. *Peter* had made his concluſion; to morrow (thinkes he) (for meſſages paſt betweene him and the Church, which ſpent this night in prayer for him, and therefore knew the danger) I muſt bee put to it, therefore I will ſtrengthen my ſelfe to night: The Keepers ſtood vpon their guard, and reſolued that no *Peter* ſhould paſſe them: yet is *Peter* deliuered; and how I pray you? God remooues all impediments, for nothing was in readineſſe.

Firſt, for man, entrance was there none, therefore God ſends an Angell, and there was no ſtop againſt him.

Next, in the darke it was hard to finde which was which; God directs an Angell to him, and he comes vpon him, and miſſes not the man, though bound to the ſame chaine with two others, as in ſtrict impriſonments they vſed to doe.

Thirdly, they were in the darke, and that was ill for noiſe; The Angell brings his darke lanthorne with him, and *ſhines* to *Peter* and none elſe.

Fourthly, the priſoner can doe little for himſelf: he is *aſleepe*, the Angell *wakes* him; hee is *laid*, the Angell *raiſes* him; he is *amazed*, the Angell *directs* him; hee is bound, the Angell *vnties* him; hee knowes not *where he is*; the Angell *guides* him; hee

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is to paſſe through ſundry *difficulties*, the Angell *conducts* him through them all, and ſo diſmiſſes him.

Wee will vſe no more words about a plaine Story, but acquaint you with our meditations: they containe the ſucceſſe of the Churches prayers; *they prayed for Peter*, the Angell thereupon is ſent to *Peter*: where ſee, 1. *How the Angell findes him*: 2. *How the Angell deliuers him.*

For the firſt, hee findes him *ſleeping*, in the midſt of feares and foes: From whence was this ſleepe? was it worldly ſorrow that cauſed it, or was it carnall ſecurity?

Anſ. In doubtfull things, charity ſuppoſes the beſt; ſo ſhould wee: worldly ſorrow cauſes ſleepe, but how? when it is not extreme, and that ſleepe is ioyned with ſtarting; carnall ſecurity will cauſe ſleep: but why ſhould we charge *Peter* with that at this time? his ſleepe came from a better cauſe, hee was at peace with God, hee had the Churches prayers for him, the cauſe for him, his conſcience for him, God and his Angels for him; hee could die but once, and for one death hee was prepared: hence his boldneſſe before, Chapters 4. and 5. hence his confidence, here hee reſolued with *Dauid*, *I will lay mee downe and ſleepe*, and withall, God gaue reſt to his beloued, as it is in the *Pſalmes*, reſt more than ordinary to his minde, to his body: hence the Angell can hardly awake him, and being awaked, he is not terrified as a guilty perſon would haue beene in this caſe: Do then but conſider, 1. The man. 2. His behauiour in like caſes. 3. The time and

circumstances. 4. The exercises of the Church for him. 5. The messenger, and message sent to him. 6. The manner of his behauiour when he is awaked, and you will see that his sleepe grew not from distemper, but from strength of faith and comfort.

Now to the Points.

Doct. 1. Where first, from the order, see the power of ioynt prayers; they beare downe all before them, and preuaile in heauen and earth: as the Word that comes from heauen, prospers in the thing whereunto it is sent; so the word that goes to heauen, the prayers of the Church, strike vp to God, there they lie at his gates, and neuer will away without their errand; and when they are answered, then they come downe with authority, and raigne ouer all impediments below; Witnesse this Story: *Peter* is committed, the persecuters are resolute, the foes many, the friends few, meanes none but God, to God the Church goes; the enemies plotte, the Church prayes; they shut the prison doores, the Church opens heauens doores; so ther's old rugging for the prisoner, but the Church winnes him. God, to let them see what prayers bee, sends him to them while they are praying; there, saith God, (if you will take no deniall) there hee is; thereby pointing vs to the meanes of his deliuerance: wee neede not many words for proofe of this: *Iames* saith, *The prayer of one righteous man preuailes much*; if of one, what of twenty! what of an hundred! and he instances in *Elijah*, *He alone could open and shut heauen*; then well may many open and shut prisons on earth: nay, adde further, the ioynt prayers of vn-

Esa. 55.

Iames 5.

vnbeleeuers and hypocrites haue done much: when heathenish *Niniuie* fasted and prayed, God heard; when false *Rehoboam* humbled himself and his people, God was intreated; how much more shall the faithfull prayers of the Church preuaile? preuaile (I say) both for the preuenting and remooving euils, and obtaining and keeping of good things: What shall we instance the life of *Asa, Iehoshaphat, Hezekiah?* when was it otherwise? when did the Church of God euer ioyne in a common petition to God, but they sped? no instance to the contrarie: Ionah 3. 2. Chron. 12.

No maruell, this exercise is well grounded and warranted, it hath the warrant of a Precept: 1. *Pray for one another; call vpon me.* *Reas.* 1. Iames 5.

2. The warrant of a promise, *I will deliuer thee.* Psal. 50.

3 The warrant of experience, neuer any yet vsed it, but they preuailed.

Praiers are presents very welcome to God, hee prefers them to all sacrifices, being immediate worships of his Maiestie; Let mee heare thy voice, it is pleasant: No father loues the voice of his children, like as God loues the voice of his Church; *'Tis his musicke and perfume, Ken.* 5. 8: *Reas.* 2. Cant. 2. 14.

3. The parties are very deare who tender them; God loues his Church aboue all creatures, hee gaue his Sonne for her, and therefore her sutes shall haue acceptance: *Let mee see thy face, its comely. Esther* neuer pleased *Ahasuerosh* so wel, as the Church pleaseth Christ: *Reas.* 3. Cant. 2. 14.

4. The parties from and through whom they are presented, please: they are indited and abbetted by the holy Ghost, *Rom.* 8. tendred by Christ *Reas.* 4. Rom. 8.

Ieſus, and ſhall theſe be denied? Adde to this,

5. The party to whom they are directed, to God; who is all truth, mercy, grace, wiſedome, power, and ſhall not theſe preuaile? Prayers ſet God on worke, and all in God, his wiſedome, his power, his Angels, and what then can hinder?

Vſe 1. Looke backward, and call to minde your ſinne this day, ſee, many a *Peter* hath beene in priſon, and prayers were not made by the Church; many a member ſicke, and prayers were not made by the Elders; yea many a Church diſtreſſed, *Bohemia* afflicted, the *Palatinate* and *Valtoline* diſtreſſed, yet wee did not pray; the enemy could curſe, but wee did not pray: and therefore how iuſtly might God diſtreſſe and leaue vs deſtitute of his helpe, and the Churches prayers?

2. Looke forward, and preſerue and improue this your intereſt in God, let no *Peter*, no Preacher, no Chriſtian, no neighbour lie in the chaines by you, (whether in the chaines of ſickneſſe, or pouerty, or debt, or paine, or ſinne, or temptation) but doe you repriue him: you haue a key that will open any locke, a medicine that will heale any wound, a weapon that will preuaile in any place; draw this weapon, vſe this medicine: if men bee ſicke, pray them whole; if poore, pray them rich; if ſad, pray them merry.

But is this ſo eaſily done? yes verily by the whole Church; as it is for the outward eſtate when one is very poore, it is hard for two or three to ſet him vp againe, but nothing for a thouſand; and when one is in a pit, it is much for one, but not for many

many to pull him out: ſee here, it is long of vs that men lie ſo long vnder their burdens: would we ioyntly commend them to God, our prayers would take, mens chaines would off, true ſpirituall chaines. Why, if ſo, were it not worth the while? What, may we eaſe our brethren of temptations, of paſſions, of luſts, and will wee not? But for outward croſſes, ſaith not Saint *Iames*, let the prayers of the Church heale the ſicke? Saith not the ſtory, the praiers of the Church procured *Peters* liberty? But ſay they be not alwaies deliuered; yet it is good to get the croſſes mitigated, ſanctified, ſweetned, and ſomething will be done if we pray; Doe this then or nothing. Perhaps you will excuſe other negligences: you would viſit your ſicke neighbour, but you queſtion his diſeaſe, your welcome; you would releeue your poore neighbours, but you haue it not; why there is no Chriſtian man but he hath an intereſt in God, a ſpirit of prayer; lift vp a prayer for thy brethren, if thou canſt doe nothing elſe, and this will doe thee and him good: praier in this caſe for others, is a cleerer euidence of grace, than for our ſelues.

Ob. *Anſ.* *Ob.* *Anſ.*

Heere is comfort and encouragement; comfort for our ſelues, if members of the Church, if wee bleed with her, if wee pray for her, if wee ſay, *If I forget thee, O Ieruſalem, then let my right hand forget her cunning*: the comfort is great; wee haue that which Saint *Paul*, thirſted for; the prayers of the Church; And this is a priuiledge worth ten worlds, and a comfort beyond all apprehenſion, when a man lookes round about him, and can ſay, there is

a towne

a towne, I haue ſome prayers there, there is another, I haue ſtocke going there, nay, in euery Shire, euery Nation, ſome that bee enlarged when I am barren, ſome quickned when I am dull, and I am an aduenturer in the Churches ſhip, I haue a ſtocke in her treaſure, and an intereſt in her prayers; this keepes the head aboue water, and preſerues from ſinking.

4. For encouragement, to pray for the Church: would Gods people enter into a holy league, and tye themſelues in their ſeuerall cloſets, to ſpend ſo much time weekely, or daily in praier, for ſome particular perſon, or place, Church or Nation; I wonder how they ſhould miſſe; Tell me where euer the Churches ioynt prayers did euer miſ-carry, or proue abortiue; in what place, in what caſe, for what people? Prayers haue been made formen out of the Church, and haue ſped, witneſſe *Niniue*; for men in the Church (good men, bad men) and haue ſped; prayers haue beene made by Land, and haue preuailed; on the Seas by *Ionah*, and haue ſped, they haue preuailed vnder the earth, in dens, and dungeons, and caues; prayers haue beene made for ſicke men, and haue holpe them; for dying men, for poore men, for captiues, for priſoners, and haue holpen; for men againſt perſecution, againſt temptation, againſt ſorrow, againſt beaſts, againſt men; againſt deuils: prayers haue been omnipotent heretofore, why not now?

Ob. *Ob.* Why now, if we were as others, Gods hand (we know) is not ſhortened, his eare not heauy; but our ſins, our crying ripe ſins, hinder good things from vs.

Anſ.

Anſ. Why therefore ſet againſt thoſe ſinnes by prayer, caſt out your owne, crie downe other mens, out-cry them. *Anſ.*

Ob. Oh but they cry loud. *Ob.*

Anſ. Yet praier hath the ſtronger voice, the bloud of Chriſt ſpeakes better things than bloudy ſinnes, &c. Let *Sodome* yeeld ten holy men, and ſhee ſhall be ſpared; let one *Eliah* ſtand vp for ſtiffe-necked Iſrael, and one *Amos* plead for rebellious Iudah, and God will ſhew mercy. *Anſ.* Gen. 18. Iames 5. Amos 7.3,2

Ob. True indeed, if we had ſuch as they, but our praiers are weake and faint. *Ob.*

Anſ. 1. They were men ſubiect to like paſſions. 2. The prayer of the righteous is preuailing. 3. Theſe here mentioned were new conuerts, yet preuailed with God for *Peter*. *Anſ.* Iam. 5.16,17.

Ob. Oh but here the whole Church ioined: if all *Iſrael* might meete from *Dan* to *Beerſheba*, there might be ſome hope. *Ob.*

Anſ. Wee may, and doe more than theſe might; 1. We may meet in publike aſſemblies euery Sabbath: 2. Theſe were but few that liued in the dark, and met in the night, and in *Heſters* time in their ſeuerall families, and the whole State was then againſt the truth, and againſt the Scriptures, and all Religion was diſgraced, yet then they preuailed, much more we now. *Anſ.*

Ob. But now it is too late, many Churches abroad be quite ſcattered, many men at home haue their backes and hearts quite broken, with wants, temptations, diſcouragements. *Ob.*

Anſ. Whileſt God calls in his word, it is not too late, *Anſ.*

late, God is vſed to ſee men ſinking before hee ſets in; their extremity is his opportunity: when *Peter* is within one night of the ſword, then is his time.

Ob. But I haue waited, and ſee no ſucceſſe.

Anſ. So did the Church, they pray for *Peter* this weeke, the next, and the next, the doores be ſtill ſhut, the chains be ſtill on; well, now they haue but one night more to wait, they wait that; but ere morning all is wonne. If then we haue but one day, one night, one houre to ſpend; hope, pray, wait, that day, that night, that houre, God will be ſeene in the Mount: deliuerance ſhall come, if praier go on the errand; it euer was ſo, euer ſhall bee ſo, diſpute not, but beleeue: there is who praies, & ſpeaks not, and there is too that ſpeakes, who prayes not; if thou wilt pray, thou muſt open thy needs to God, as thy Father, through Chriſt, God-man, as thy Mediatour, from God the holy Ghoſt, as the inditer of thy praiers: if thou wilt pray, thy heart muſt be 1. emptied of purpoſes of ſinne: 2. broken: 3. purged from guil by faith; which faith muſt then worke before thou beginneſt, ſay with *Dauid, I will call, and God will anſwer me*; and when thou haſt done, conclude, I haue ſpoken, and ſhall in due time and manner be anſwered; thus doe, and bee ſure that thou neither beginne nor end a lawfull petition (of ſuch only we ſpeak) before thou art aware, let faith enter thy ſute, and end, and ſubſcribe it, and thou preuaileſt.

Gen. 22.

Pſal. 66. 18.

Pſal. 86 7. And the 56. 9.

Now to particulars.

How findes the Angell Peter? Sure he cannot ſleep this night, being vpon his life to morrow, and in all like-

likelihood knowing of it by the Church; howſoeuer, not ſure of life one day to an end, but like enough to be ſent for at an houres warning, as *Iohn Baptiſts* head was. Notwithſtanding all this, *Peter* ſleeps as ſoundly as euer in his life, and wakes without terrour; whence was this? from corruption? no; From naturall courage? no; when *Peter* was yonguer, and therefore naturally bolder, he was a diſtard: whence then? conſider the reaſons before, and it will be found, that it was from ſpeciall comfort and confidence in God; which comfort moſt attends priſons and perſecutions: here ſee the ſtrength of ſpirituall peace and comfort.

The Lord hath comforts for his children, that will quiet and ſupport them in any feares and ſtraits: his conſolations will make a man ſleepe without a bed; liue almoſt without a ſoule: They will make one bold in danger, quiet in trouble, liue in the iawes of death: *The ioy of the Lord is ſtrong*, ſaith *Nehemiah*, ſtrong indeed, that will carry a man ouer all: *Peter* had a ſtrong heart, that can thus ſleep, thus wake, that can looke vpon Chaines, vpon Priſons, vpon Tyrants, vpon Torments, vpon Angels; (good and bad) and neuer breake his ſleepe for the matter. *Pauls* ioyes were ſtrong, that made him *ſing in the ſtocks*: *Dauids* faith ſtrong, that made him ſay, *I will lye downe and ſleepe, I will not feare though ten thouſand riſe vp againſt mee*: thoſe were ſtrong and ſtrange ioies that ſupported *Dauid* in all his feares, and made him ſay, *In the multitude of my thoughts, thy comforts glad my ſoule*; thoſe ſtrong that triumphed ouer rackings, mockings,

Doct. 2.

Nehem. 8.

Act. 16.

Pſal. 3.

Pſal. 94. 19.

ſcourgings,&c. as in the eleuenth to the *Hebrewes*.

1. Q. Whence theſe comforts. *Reaſ.* 1. *Queſt.* But whence comes their ſtrength? Becauſe they be Gods ioyes, the ioies of the Spirit, deriued immediatly from the fountaine; and things be pureſt and ſtrongeſt there.

2. Becauſe ſpirituall; for as ſpirits are more actiue and powerfull than bodies, ſo ſpirituall things than bodily and naturall.

3. Theſe ioyes are moſt certaine and durable, theſe ouercome and out-liue all croſſes, and all other comforts.

4. They are all-ſufficient, and borrow no helpe from creatures: Nature and Art work with inſtruments, and by meanes; they cannot ſupport without meat, ſtrengthen without ſleepe, giue ſleepe without warmth, nor warmth without a bed, &c. But God can, beyond means, without means, work comfort, make one ſee in the darke, liue in death.

2. Q. What. *Anſ.* 1. *Queſt.* But what be theſe comforts of God?

Anſ. Precious promiſes, applyed by God in due ſeaſon, and brought home to the heart, which reuiue the ſpirits more than any balme; and theſe promiſes come thicke vpon *Peter* now: Hee thinketh, hath not God ſaid, that *the ſighing of priſoners comes to him?* that *he battles vp all our teares?* that *we ſhould caſt our care vpon him, and he will care for vs?* that *in ſix and ſeuen troubles, they ſhall not come neere mee?* that *in fire and water he will be with me?* and did not I hear my Sauiour ſay, *Bleſſed are they that are perſecuted for righteouſneſſe ſake?* read not I how *Dauid* ſaid, *I will lie downe and ſleep?* and therefore I will doe ſo too.

2. Strengthening graces, God powres the ſpirit of faith, patience, power, courage, into his in due time; and they raiſe the heart, as wine the fainting ſpirits; euery ſauing grace is healing, is ſtrengthening.

3. Hourely experience of Gods care and prouidence; and a childe neuer ſees the loue of his mother ſo much as when he is ſicke, ſo Gods children, &c.

Now that makes them plucke vp their feet with *Iacob*, and ſay with *Paul*, *I know whom I haue truſted*; and with the Church, *Thou wilt guide vs to death*; and after (as *Dauid* addes) *receiue to glory*.

4. Speciall peace of conſcience and ioy of the holy Ghoſt, by new expreſſions of Gods fauour; and rauiſhments of heauen: then God opens heauen, and they ſee their life and crowne, and ſo are carried ouer all.

Queſt. When doth God thus comfort his? 3. Q. When.

Anſ. When they moſt need it, as then the mother brings out her preſerues, when the childe is ſicke: firſt, when they bee moſt humbled and empty of themſelues; therefore after greateſt humiliations come greateſt conſolations, as *Dauid*, *Abraham*, and others euer found.

2. But ſpecially in the day of triall and perſecution, the more the Deuill beſtirres him, the more God beſtirs him: thus the ſweeteſt nights that euer *Iacob* ſpent were in the field, and ſo for *Peter*; and when had *Dauid* thoſe large affections to riſe at midnight, when was the Word ſo ſweet, but when his troubles were bitter? Gen. 28. and 32. chap. Pſal. 119.

The Vſe is double, 1. Get theſe comforts, we get *Vſe.*

aqua vitæ ready against qualms; Bezoar-stone, and cordials against fits: but the cordials that helpe all, is the holy Ghost, the Comforter; Art is blind, and often posed; Nature weake, and often foiled; (like a bow that must not be drawne beyond compasse) only grace and spirituall comfort is inuincible: get this, and you may sleepe in a dungeon, liue in the darke, want all, and yet haue all; want these, and a flea may breake your sleepe, and a hand-writing dash your mirth in the midst of all friends.

Dan. 5.

2. Let such as haue spirituall hearts thus affected, stay themselues here; feare not pouerty, there be comforts beyond the paine of famine; feare not sicknesse, there be comforts beyond all fits of sicknesse: feare not death, feare not chaines, feare not any thing that you can or shall suffer: Not any thing? Why, a man is subiect to racking, to burning, &c. yet feare not, and why? the Lord hath comfort in all, and aboue all tribulations. When he cals a *Saul* to a crowne, he makes him another man: so when he cals a man to a chaine, *Peter* is not the man in prison, he was out of prison; at the first he was fearefull of a wenches word, after he was willing, yet flesh hung backe, *Iohn* the last Chapter, Verse 18. But when put vpon it, heare his voice, see his face; he can be as quiet, as comfortable, as well in prison as euer.

Reuel. 16.

1. Cor. 6.

Act. 5. 29. 4. 13.

Ob. Oh but I finde my selfe affraid of words.

Ans. So was *Peter* at first.

Ob. Oh but, saith our Sauiour, beware of men.

Ans. No man so malicious as God is mercifull, so perillous as God is pittifull. Oh but say we liued where

where we ſhould lie in cold irons, in the darke, bee halfe pined, ſtarued; who can beare theſe? *Peter* can, any can, when God cals them to it.

O but ſay wee were put to the fiery triall, flames are intolerable and mercileſſe. Oh but flames are in Gods hands, *Daniel* 3. Chapter: Againe, Martyrs haue had more comfort there, than in all their liues before. Oh but ſome of them haue cried out of paines: And doe not men ſo who die in their beds too? but God hath borne them through theſe, and made them amends.

O get then inward ſtrength, and that will ouercome all feares, all torments; conclude wee with that good Martyr, If God call euer any of his to any ſuch ſufferings, hee will either weaken the flame, or ſtrengthen their faith; he hath promiſed (that, which let vs liue and die in; to wit) that hee will not tempt beyond ſtrength: *And hee is able to doe exceeding abundantly aboue all that we can ſpeak or thinke.* 2. Cor. 10.

Aſſure your ſelues, the feare of perſecution is more than perſecution it ſelfe; therefore I ſpeake to your feares, for there is none (through Gods mercy) with vs, I am ſure, to bee felt (I thinke) to be feared.

The ſame night, &c. That the Lord doth often hold his people long in ſuſpence, for thoſe things which hee meanes to giue them; hee is to our ſeeming ſlow, but ſure; ſure, but ſlow: thus hee was as good as his word to *Abraham*, hee gaue him a ſonne, but hee held him off to the laſt houre; hee kept touch with his poſterity, brought them out of Egypt, *Doct.* 3.

Egypt, but he deferred it till the last day; his bond was almost forfeited, yet hee paid it before the Sun set, *Exod.* 12.17.41. Thus *Ioseph* was long in prison, yet at the appointed time brought forth; and *Israel* long in captiuitie, prayers were made, and yet *Daniel* could heare no answer till night was vpon him; *Iacob* wrestles till day, &c. so also the woman of Canaan, *Matth.* 15. and the Church here: in all which places wee see, that God is mindfull of his day. 2. That hee deferres sometime till the last houre be running.

Psal. 105.19. Dan 9.

Reas. The reason of this delay is manifold. 1. God would turne our eyes backward, and make vs say, O it is iust God should deferre me: I haue deferred him; he called and I would not heare; prayed mee againe, againe, and againe, and I would not answer; therefore it is equall I should call and cry, and not be heard.

2. God hereby would sharpen our praiers for the present; therefore he seemes deafe, because wee should speake out; therefore slow, because wee should bee earnest. Thus *Daniel* interprets it: God deferres him, this is (saith he) but to try mee, therefore he spits vpon his hands, and takes better hold; O Lord forgiue, saith he, O Lord heare, O Lord open, and powres so many petitions and arguments vpon God, that there is no resistance. Thus *Iacob*, hee sees the day comming vpon him, and hee had made nothing of it all night, and therefore now he sets to it, *Goe!* saith he, *I will not let thee goe without a blessing.*

3. Hereby hee prepares vs for the future receiuing

ting of his comforts; thus he humbles vs, thus hee enlargeth vs, thus fits vs for thankfulneſſe, the more bleſſings coſt vs, the better we will priſe them, and praiſe God for them: adde to this, that theſe repulſes driue vs to further ſearches, as the Iſraelites at *Ai*, and *Gibeah*. Ioſ. 7. Iudg. 20.

Doth the Lord thus long deferre ſometime his intended comforts and anſwers? Let vs know the courſes of his prouidence, and wait vpon him: behold the husbandman waits; when he hath ſowne his ſeed, hee doth not looke to reape and ſow all in a day, his Corne is firſt buried, yea it dies, yea it growes downeward, before it comes vpward, and when it is vp, receiues many a ſnib and checke, yet he waits; And why? becauſe he hath experience: ſo muſt wee, when wee haue ſowne our ſeed; ſay wee bury our prayers, ſay to our ſeeming they die, ſay they grow downward, backward, ſay all things ſeeme to be worſe after praier with vs than before, yet wait; why? wee haue experience of our owne and other mens ſucceſſe: neuer did men ſow this ſeed, but they had a crop, though a late harueſt, yet a harueſt. *Vſe* 1.

Ob. Oh but I haue praied exceeding long. *Ob.*

Anſ. How long? *Iſaak* prayed twenty yeares for a childe, before he ſped; *Abraham* thirty, before he ſped; *Abrahams* poſterity were foure hundred yeares in captiuity, before they were deliuered; the Church thirſted for Chriſt, one thouſand, two thouſand, three thouſand yeares, before they had him: How many thouſands, hundreds, ſcore of yeares, haſt thou waited? *Anſ.*

Ob. *Ob.* O but I haue tryed all my friends, vſed all meanes, prayed my ſelfe, and got others to ſpeake too, and yet no help.

Anſ. *Anſ.* And might not *Peter* ſay as much? not a Chriſtian in Ieruſalem, but had ſpoken and ſpoken often, and yet he ſtickes.

Ob. *Ob.* O but matters with me are worſe and worſe, the more I pray againſt pouerty, the poorer I am; the more I pray for patience, the worſe I am; the more I pray for faith, the leſſe I haue; the more I pray againſt paſſions and temptations, the more they flie in my face.

Anſ. *Anſ.* Is not this, as wee ſaid, that the corne muſt goe backward, before it come forward? was it not ſo with *Abraham* and *Sarah*, the longer they praied, the elder they waxed, and ſo vnfitter for iſſue?

Ob. *Ob.* O but my ſinnes grow ſtronger by praier.

Anſ. *Anſ.* Not ſo, thou feeleſt it more than before; it is not becauſe ſinne is ſtronger, but thou ſounder. Againe, theſe motions of ſinne, be not motions of life, but ſymptoms of death; as the fowle ſtruggles, and ſprunts moſt when the head is off: the pangs of death be now vpon thy luſts, take comfort.

Ob. *Ob.* O but now your comforts come too late, the date is out for me.

Anſ. *Anſ.* Why? hath God ſaid pray no more, as to *Ieremie*; hath he ſtopt thy mouth? ſo long as God ſaith, pray; ſo long as the ſpirit within thee ſaith, pray; ſo long as Gods people haue hearts to pray, neuer ſay it is too late to pray: if *Peter* bee out by midnight, or by day-break, it is as well as if he had been out a moneth before.

Ob.

Ob. O but delayes breakes the heart. *Ob.*

Anſ. But note the end of delayes, they are neuer to deny or fruſtrate, but to fit, and to quicken: make theſe vſes of delaies, and then if thy ſute be not honeſt, neuer begin it; if it be, neuer leaue it: learne of husbandmen; when they pull downe a tree, or lift at ſome blocke, if they cannot ſtirre it, they call in helpe, if it come not at the firſt pull, they pull againe, if not then, ha, againe; if not then, ha, once more; at laſt they feele it comming, and then it comes amaine: learne of *Eliah*; hee prayed for raine; hauing prayed, lookes about him, nothing comes; hee prayed againe, nothing comes; hee prayed againe, nothing comes; at length, O Maſter (ſaith his ſeruant) I ſee a cloud, but it is but little; Is it a cloud? then once more to it, and by and by the heauens were masked with clouds: learne of theſe men; *Peter* ſtickes in the dungeon, one lifts, hee cannot ſtirre him; try you (ſaith hee) to a ſecond, to a third, try a fourth, a fift; at length heauen ſtirres, the chaines ſtirre, and *Peter* comes in amongſt them: learne of Chriſt himſelfe; the Widow dealt with a Iudge, not a Father; a bad Iudge, ſhee was alone, a ſimple Orator, yet ſhe prevailes: learne of beggers; they haue no command, no promiſe, no acquaintance, no Art; and yet will ſtand it out: the maſter chides, the begger ſtands it out; the dame chides, hee ſtands ſtill; the ſeruants come, and ſay they dare not ſerue him; the children ſay wee muſt not, and yet hee will not away. O Lord, helpe our faith, how weake bee we, if hauing precept, promiſe, kindred, Gods ſeruants, *Anſ.*

1. King. 18. 43.

Luke 18.

Gods Sonne on our ſides, we will be put off with a delay? well (as I ſaid) ſo long as a night, an houre, a minute, is left, pray; one night may compaſſe that which an hundred before could not.

It followeth, *An Angell, &c.*

Doct 4. The Lord hath euer meanes at hand for his ſeruants; comfort and deliuerance, if ſet on worke:

2. Pet. 2. well might *Peter* ſay, *The Lord knoweth how to deliuer his*, &c. He is neuer at a ſtand, if they know how to pray, he knoweth how to comfort.

Reaſ. 1. In himſelf he is al-ſufficient, infinite in wiſedome,

Eſa. 4. 5. to inuent meanes; in power, to act them; and if need be, to create more.

2. He is the Lord of Hoaſts, the Lord of euery creature; if our works lie in the Seas, hee is Lord of the Seas; if on the Land, hee is Lord there; if in Priſon, he beareth the keyes of euery Goale; if heauens can help vs, he commands them; if winds, if beaſts, if friends, if ſtrangers, if foes, if Angels; the Lord hath the command of all perſons, things, and places.

Vſe 1. For comfort, roule thy ſelfe vpon God, caſt thy

Pſal. 37. care vpon him, he will bring it to paſſe; is thy burden pouerty? caſt it vpon him, and hee will helpe it; is it ſinne, feare, ſorrow? whatſoeuer it be, he can beare it, and diſcharge thee.

This Sermon was made in the depth of the dearth. Oh but I ſee no meanes, I owe ſo much; ſo many in my family, and no meanes.

This is as if they ſhould haue ſaid, If wee had a friend in the Court, to moue *Herod*; if a friend in the Watch, to bribe him; if in the Priſon, to ſee him; then ſomething might be done, but now all

meanes,

meanes faile vs. No, no: God hath meanes beyond our ſight; if men cannot doe it, Angels can and ſhall: and if no man will pay the Widowes debt, God will: if no body elſe will feed *Eliah*, the Ra- 2. King. 4.
uens ſhall: what doe we talke of means? all means are ſhut vp in God.

Ob. Oh but my caſe is deſperate, it is not poſſible to helpe me. *Ob.*

Anſ. Now wee ſhall haue a tale of impoſsibili- *Anſ.*
ties: And why not poſsible? ſhall any thing be im- Zach 8.6.
poſsible to God?

Ob. Oh but there be an hundred blockes in my way. *Ob.*

Anſ. But what is in his way, that makes his way *Anſ.*
thorow the ſeas, ſtones, wood, iron, &c? goe to the Eſa. 43.16.
priſon, there is a blocke, a guard; paſſe that guard, there is a blocke, a doore; paſſe the doore, there is another, a chaine; paſſe the chaine, there is another, an iron gate. O but what of this? if they can breake thorow all hinderances of vnbeliefe, diſcouragements, to prayer; God will breake thorow theſe and a thouſand more, to their comfort. O but God workes no wonders now. No? his Name is wonderfull ſtill; his power as great as euer, his wiſedome as deepe as euer, his promiſes as good, his loue as much to his as euer, our neede as much, our intereſt as good, our Sauiour as good; all things ſtand as before: if wee can vſe former meanes, wee ſhall finde former ſucceſſe, and God will doe abundantly aboue all that wee can ſpeake or thinke: wee haue the Lords promiſe for this, *Epheſians* 3.20. and *Eſay* 42.16. *I will make darke light,*

Marke our Sauiours collection from Manna to bread. Matth 4. Deut. 8.3. Eſa. 9.6.

light, and crookednesse straight: wee haue had our owne experience, let any man that hath had any acquaintance with God and this holy duty, tell mee when prayers were not successefull; when diddest thou euer speake to thy heauenly Father, but he did answer thee with some ease, some comfort? When diddest thou euer pray, but thy heart was thereby somewhat lightened? and if thou canst not but say with *Dauid*, in the same day I asked, I was thus farre answered, *That my heart was strengthened*, *Ps.* 139.3. doe not faile to conclude with *Dauid*, *Though I walke in the midst of troubles, yet* (vpon prayer) *I shall be receiued*, 7. *and God will perfect his mercies in me for euer*, 8.

Psal. 139.3.

Thus wee haue dispatcht some meditations: more wee haue, but they must bee only named; as 1. *Herod* would, but could not bring forth *Peter* to tryall and execution: men be but men, and must doe as they may; for what they would doe against the Church, nor they, nor all the Deuils in Hell can doe.

2. The Lord can giue sleepe and peace in any place, at any time, in any company.

3. Gods best seruants and messengers, are sometimes yoaked with vilest offenders, &c.

4. Gods best creatures are the Churches seruants: Angels.

5. Lastly, the Lord can quickly shake his out of their chaines, rags, feares, fetters, &c. But what doe I meane thus to exceed? Brethren, I would faine haue you more thirsty of your time; doe you not waste it (as others doe) in idle impertinences, much

much leſſe in ſurueying States and Kingdomes. It is not for vs to ſit vpon Crownes and Thrones, and to turne Stateſmen; it is for vs to bee thankefull where God bleſſes, and to be prayerfull when the Church labours: to this end I haue ſaid thus much; to perſwade you to the practiſe of what you know. now your turne followes, lets ſee what will bee done, and how well you will improue time, in ſpeaking to God, rather than to, or of men.

FINIS.